

1. (Once amended) A method [system] for assigning ratings [Ratings] to [Funds] funds comprised primarily of securities, comprising the steps of:

identifying a sector corresponding to each fund,

identifying financial futures corresponding to each identified sector,

calculating expected annualized median returns for each of sectors based on said identified financial futures,

calculating an expected range of returns for each of said sectors based on prices of options on the futures,

calculating for each fund an annual return adjustment factor based on the annualized return of each of said funds and the median return for other funds in the sector,

calculating a negative variability of returns for each of the funds based on,

calculating an adjustment for the negative variability of returns for each fund based on the

a comparison between the negative variability of returns of the fund compared to the negative variability of the corresponding sector,

calculating a low and a high expected annual return for each fund based on the expected annualized median return for the corresponding sector, an expected range of returns for each sector, the annual return adjustment factor for the fund, and the adjustment for negative variability,

calculating a median expected annual return based on the low and high expected annual returns, and assigning a rating to each fund based on said median expected annual return [using information gleaned from the pricing of Futures. Expected future returns for the Funds are combined with information on the relative performance of the Fund to determine the Rating].

Please cancel claims 2 and 3.

Please add the following new claims 4- 14.

4. (New) A method for assigning ratings to a fund, comprising the steps of:

calculating an expected return over a time period for a sector corresponding to the fund based on financial futures corresponding to the sector,

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calculating an expected range of returns for the sector based on prices of options for the futures,

calculating an expected return for the fund over a time period based on the calculated expected return for the corresponding sector, the expected range of returns for the corresponding sector, and on information specific to the fund, and

assigning a rating based on the expected return for the fund.

5. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein said information specific to the fund includes an annual return adjustment factor equal to the difference between the annualized returns for the fund and a median return for other funds in the sector.

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6. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein said information specific to the fund includes a factor for the extent to which the funds returns are below the median for that sector for a time period.

7. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein, in the step of calculating expected annual returns for the fund, an adjustment for qualitative factors is made.

8. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein said step of calculating an expected annual return comprises the steps of calculating a low, and a high expected annual return.

9. (New) The method of claim 4, wherein said step of assigning a rating comprises assigning one of a plurality of ratings to each fund.

10. (New) A method for predicting expected returns of a fund, comprising the steps of:  
calculating an expected return over a time period for a sector corresponding to the fund based on financial futures corresponding to the sector,

calculating an expected range of returns for the sector based on prices of options for the futures,

calculating an expected annual return for the fund based on the expected annualized return for the corresponding sector, the expected range of returns for the corresponding sector, and on information specific to the fund.

11. (New) The method of claim 10, wherein said information specific to the fund includes an annual return adjustment factor equal to the difference between the annualized returns for the fund and a median return for other funds in the sector.